

LISTENER

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Pride in Reverse

IT would be wrong to suggest that the purpose of most, or any, of the correspondents who have been discussing the New Zealand Division on this page has been to smear the Division or prick the bubble of its glory. Their purpose has been to bring other Divisions—English, Scots, Welsh, and Irish—into an equally brilliant flood of light. But the correspondent who writes to us to-day protesting against the tone of some of those letters is a healthy human being as well as a good New Zealander. It is a fact that we often seem ashamed in New Zealand of the things of which we should be most proud. Nor is the explanation simple modesty. If it were, that would be a good thing. But it is meekness, timidity, conditioned inferiority. We are a century old, with social and political standards for which we need apologise to no one; and if we have not yet developed our own cultural standards, we are at least beginning to recognise the things we do not wish to reproduce. Why then should we hesitate to accept one glorious fact which the rest of the world has conceded without any reservations at all—the skill, gallantry, and toughness of our fighting troops? Fighting after all is the only national activity in which we start level with the rest of the world. We really are in many respects "country lads"; distance, time, and environment compel it. But a country lad can give a good account of himself if his home is attacked; and if our country lads, brown as well as white, have fought so well in this war that even their enemies pay tribute to them, it is not merely timid, as our correspondent suggests, to shrink from praising them, but morbid and discreditable. It is pride in reverse, which, if we do not pull ourselves up, will make a "please sir" nation of us like too many of the smaller groups of history. In the meantime some of us are coming very near to betraying the men whose reputation it should be our proud duty to uphold.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

OUR SOLDIERS AND OTHERS

Sir,—Your correspondents "ex-2nd N.Z.E.F." and Albert E. Young express the opinions of many old soldiers when they deprecate praising our New Zealand Division too highly. But I think it is only fair to point out that a certain amount of this hero-worship originated in Britain. Who of us has not heard of the House of Commons incident when members rose and cheered the news that our Division had stopped the rot at Alamein? To compare our men with other crack Divisions appears to me like comparing Joe Louis with Jack Dempsey, but my personal opinion is that the "Old Contemptibles" excelled all other armies of the present century; next to them I place the Anzacs on Gallipoli, with only this difference—"The Old Contemptibles" had the more perfect discipline.—G.E.F., 1st N.Z.E.F. (Sefton).

Sir,—What is wrong with us in New Zealand? Why can't we praise our own soldiers as freely as the Americans praise theirs or the Russians (every day), theirs? Must we subordinate ourselves for ever to older and bigger countries (including the United Kingdom), praising what they praise, unless it happens to be something of our own? I am tired of it all. I think the New Zealand Division one of the best bodies of troops in the world, and I am not going to blush when I say so.

OVER AGE (Wellington).

(We refer to this letter and the preceding one in to-day's leading article.—Ed.)

A "DOCTOR MAC" EPISODE

Sir,—The "Doctor Mac" episode broadcast from Station 2ZB on Tuesday, January 25, concerned a property transaction in which a land agent was the villain of the piece through his endeavours to purchase a property "on behalf of a client" when it was his intention to acquire the place for himself. May I point out for the information of the general public who may get a wrong impression from the story, that a transaction carried through as set out in the broadcast, is unlawful, unless the agent discloses to the principal that he is the purchaser. This is clearly set out in the Secret Commissions Act, and the penalty for a breach is a term of imprisonment or a heavy fine.—LICENSED LAND AGENT (Wellington).

RUSSIA'S "SHADOW"

Sir,—In this week's *Listener* I turned as usual to the editorial first, and noted the quotation from Field-Marshal Smuts: "Central and Eastern Europe, Western and Northern Asia are passing under the shadow of the U.S.S.R., etc., etc." I then read the report of an interview with Kathleen Hall by a member of *The Listener* staff, and found this (quoting K.H.): "And then came the Communists—whole villages going to school, sanitation introduced, local industries built up, and all unused land brought into cultivation as State property for the poorest."

Now if Kathleen Hall's version of the Communists at work is correct (and there is no reason to doubt it), no one in his senses could liken their advent

to a "shadow." I hate to come to the conclusion that Field-Marshal Smuts is talking nonsense, or to believe that he is unscrupulously expressing himself at the dictates of his own class bias, but I think it would be safer to take the word of a Christian missionary who has had first-hand experience of practical Communism than to accept the opinion of an aged gentleman who doesn't remember that the U.S.S.R. is our very gallant ally. If he had spoken of the "shadow" of American politics passing over Europe, how quickly he would have been accused of sedition!

E. HOLLAND (New Lynn).

(If our correspondent had read the article carefully, she would have noticed that "shadow" was our word, not the Field-Marshal's. If she supposes that shadows necessarily threaten, it would be interesting to know how she protects herself on a sunny day.—Ed.)

UNPUBLISHED PROGRAMMES

Sir,—In my letter which you were good enough to publish last week, I mentioned that "most people buy it (*The Listener*), for the programmes alone." After reading your comments, it appears to me that my choice of words was a little unfortunate—perhaps "principally" would have been a better word than "alone." I myself buy *The Listener* principally for the programmes (and I know that many of my friends buy it for the same reason), still I must admit that I usually look through the rest of the journal and often find articles of great interest.

Actually, I think you are to be congratulated on the set-up and style of *The Listener*, BUT, dear sir, may I again inquire why the programmes cannot be more complete? Is it not really possible to publish at least the major work to be played each day in the classical hour, also surely the title "Symphonic Music" is inadequate for a two-hour programme from 2YC on Sunday evenings?

YASDNIL (Wellington).

A "SWING" SUGGESTION

Sir,—I think I am correct when I say that there is only one complete programme (Turntable's "Rhythm on Record") offered by the main national stations to cater for advanced swing tastes, and even this programme has a commercial taint. A suggestion, which I think should be given serious consideration, is a session to be run one night each week, for a period of perhaps half an hour's duration, dealing with the different phases of swing. In rotation there could be sessions of the blues, boogie Chicago style, New Orleans, and the modern swing style. If this suggestion does not meet with support, then I am wrong in my assumption that many listeners are dissatisfied with the present programmes, and rely upon the short-wave dial. But before I end let me emphasise one point: I do not want this letter to start a music war, and I entreat the "longhairs" who sit complacently in their armchairs enjoying hours of classical music to be a little tolerant for once, and let this new (?) and exciting music fill in just a small niche of our musical world.

"DOWN BEAT" (Oamaru).